

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 CIEP-02

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FEA-02 FPC-01 H-03 INR-10

INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 OMB-01 PM-07 RSC-01 SAM-01

SCI-06 SP-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15

DRC-01 EURE-00 FRB-02 /176 W
----- 074408

P R 291607Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9250

INFO USDOC WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG UR US

SUBJECT: SOVIET POLICY ON ENERGY PROJECTS: SHASHIN INTERVIEW

REF: A) STATE 111195 B) MOSCOW 7950

1. IN GENERAL, KAISER ARTICLE, "SOVIET SHIFT ON OIL," APPLIES ACROSS THE BOARD REMARKS BY OIL MINISTER SHASHIN INTENDED TO REFER SPECIFICALLY TO TYUMEN OIL PIPELINE. KAISER ARTICLE FAILS TO NOTE ALSO THAT SHASHIN EXPLICITLY LIMITED HIS REMARKS TO PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENTS. OTHER JOURNALISTS PRESENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE HAVE INFORMED EMBASY THAT SHASHIN STATED HE HAD NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT NATURAL GAS INASMUCH AS THIS INDUSTRIAL AREA IS OUTSIDE THE COMPETENCE OF HIS MINISTRY.

2. ACCORDING NOT ONLY TO SOME OTHER JOURNALISTS PRESENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE BUT ALSO TO FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT OF OIL MINISTRY, AND AS NOTED REF A, SHASHIN DISCLAIMED SOVIET INTENTION TO CONSTRUCT TYUMEN-NAKHODKA PIPELINE EARLIER PROJECTED AND ALSO DENIED THAT PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTION BAIKAL-AMUR RAILWAY WAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO PROVIDE IN PART SUBSTITUTE FOR PIPELINE. NOTHING IN SHASHIN'S

REMARKS INDICATED EITHER THAT VARIOUS US-SOVIET PROJECTS FOR OIL DRILING OFF SAKHALIN WERE CANCELLED OR THAT SOVIET INTEREST IN US PARTICIPATION IN SIBERIAN NATURAL GAS PROJECTS HAS FLAGGED.

3. FROM REPORTS ON PRESS CONFERENCE, EMBASSY CANNOT ENDORSE CONCLUSIONS OF KAISER ARTICLE. FURTHER, CONVERSATIONS ON ENERGY PROJECTS BETWEEN SECRETARY DENT IN EARLY APRIL AND FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD CHAIRMAN BURNS IN EARLY MAY ON ONE SIDE AND REASONABLY BROAD RANGE OF RESPONSIBLE SOVIET OFFICIALS ON OTHER SUGGEST THAT SOVIETS REMAIN DEEPLY INTERESTED IN UNDERTAKING BOTH MAJOR SIBERIAN NATURAL GAS PROJECTS.

4. DAN MORGAN ARTICLE, "US OFFICIALS DOUBT SHIFT OF NATURAL GAS," APPEARS TO PRESENT ISSUE IN REASONABLE PERSPECTIVE, APART FROM STATEMENT TO EFFECT THAT HASHIN TOLD U.S. REPORTERS HE DID NOT THINK THERE WOULD BE FOREIGN PARTICIPATION IN OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT. EMBASSY SUSPECTS THIS STATEMENT DERIVED FROM KAISER REPORT.
STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ENERGY, POLICIES, PETROLEUM PIPELINES, JOINT VENTURES, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MOSCOW08104
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740134-0983
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740511/aaaaajcu.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) STATE 111195 B) MOSCOW 7950
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 JUN 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET POLICY ON ENERGY PROJECTS: SHASHIN INTERVIEW
TAGS: ENRG, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005